

REMARKS

By the above actions, claim 1, 6 & 18 have been amended. In view of the amendments made and the following remarks, further consideration of this application is requested.

The objection to claim 6 has been addressed by the above amendment which eliminates the typographic error referred to by the Examiner. Thus, this objection should now be withdrawn.

Likewise, the above amendments address the issues raised by the Examiner in his rejection of the claims for indefiniteness under § 112, second paragraph. Thus, antecedent basis has been corrected by changing “said chuck stage.” To “a” chuck stage, and the Examiner’s question as to what was perceived to be a conflict between the cutting of claim 18 and the expansion maintain of claim 1 has been addressed by indicating that the cutting of claim 18 occurs “outwardly of a position at which the adhesive sheet is held.” On the other hand, no inconsistency is seen to exist between the expanding of claims 5-8 relative to that of claim 1. That is, claim 5 specifies that the “expanding step is performed with said plate-like article being placed on said chuck stage of said dicing device,” not necessarily in the dicing area of the dicing area of the device. Furthermore, claim 1 requires the expansion device in the “different” area of the dicing device to which the plate-like article is conveyed “together with a chuck stage of said dicing device” by virtue of the recitation that “said expansion maintaining step is performed in said different area,” i.e., the previously recited “different area in said dicing device.” Thus, no inconsistency exists between claim 1 & 5 as mistakenly thought to be the case by the Examiner and in fact corresponds to, e.g., the Fig. 10 embodiment in which there is an “expansion maintaining means placed in the welding area different from the dicing area of the dicing device.” Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection under § 112 is in order and is hereby requested.

Claim 1 was rejected under 35 USC § 102 s being anticipated by the disclosure of the Sekiya patent. At least to the extent that this rejection relates to the claims as now presented, it should be withdrawn for the following reasons.

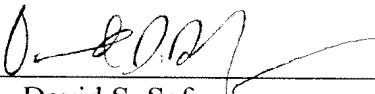
In particular, the Sekiya patent clearly does not anticipate the present invention because, as disclosed by Sekiya, before transport, the stretching ring 26 is removed, and this has the result of “allowing adjacent pellets to come close to each other.” While the pellets are

further apart than they were prior to the expanding operation, they are not maintained in their fully expanded condition due to the inherent contraction of the adhesive tape T that occurs. In contrast, because the adhesive sheet with the chips remains "mounted to said frame after said expanding step," the present invention is able perform the step of "conveying said plate-like article from the wafer spreader of said expansion device together with said frame with the increased spacings between said chips being maintained unchanged," i.e., "in a maximally expanded state of said adhesive sheet" as is set forth in amended claim 1. Thus, Sekiya cannot render obvious, let alone anticipate amended claim 1. As such, the § 102 rejection based upon the Sekiya patent should be withdrawn and such action is now requested.

The rejections of the remaining claims under 35 USC § 103 based on the Sekiya patent in various combinations with one or more of the patents to Moore, Cullen et al., Bailey, Tsujimoto et al., Ono, and Broyles should also be withdrawn since none of these patents can make up for the above describe shortcomings of the Sekiya patent relative to the present invention.

Therefore, in the absence of new and more relevant prior art being discovered, this application should now be in condition for allowance and action to that effect is requested. However, while it is believed that this application should now be in condition for allowance, in the event that any issues should remain, or an new issues arise, after consideration of this response which could be addressed through discussions with the undersigned, then the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned by telephone for the purpose of resolving any such issue and thereby facilitating prompt approval of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

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